

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1 – 22 (Canceled)

23 (New). A monolithic ceramic electronic component comprising a first external electrode, a second external electrode, and a monolithic ceramic element including an internal electrode, the first and second external electrodes being disposed on both end faces of the monolithic ceramic element,

wherein each external electrode comprises a sintered electrode layer disposed on the monolithic ceramic element and which has oxides exposed at surface portions of the sintered electrode distant from the ceramic element, an intermediate electroplated layers disposed on the sintered electrode layer, and a plated layer disposed on the intermediate electroplated layer; and wherein the exposed oxide surface has a metal disposed thereon, the metal being an electroplating seed for forming the intermediate electroplated layers.

24 (New). The monolithic ceramic electronic component according to Claim 23, wherein the seed metal has a hardness less than that of the oxides.

25 (New). The monolithic ceramic electronic component according to Claim 24, wherein the ionization tendency of the seed metal is lower than that of a metal contained in the intermediate electroplated layer.

26 (New). The monolithic ceramic electronic component according to Claim 24, wherein the intermediate electroplated layer comprises plated Ni.

27 (New). The monolithic ceramic electronic component according to Claim 24, wherein the seed metal comprises Sn or a Sn alloy.

28 (New). The monolithic ceramic electronic component according to Claim 23, wherein the ionization tendency of the seed metal is lower than that of a metal contained in the intermediate electroplated layers.

29 (New). The monolithic ceramic capacitor-manufacturing method according to Claim 28, wherein the intermediate electroplated layers are plated Ni layers.

30 (New). The monolithic ceramic capacitor-manufacturing method according to claim 28, wherein the seed metal comprises Sn or a Sn alloy.

31 (New). The monolithic ceramic capacitor-manufacturing method according to Claim 30, wherein the intermediate electroplated layer is formed on the sintered electrode layer by electroplating in a composition comprising Ni; and the plated layer is formed by plating a composition comprising tin on the intermediate electroplated layer.

32 (New). The monolithic ceramic capacitor-manufacturing method according to Claim 31, wherein the seed metal is deposited by barrel plating the sintered monolithic capacitor with media having the seed metal on the surface thereof at a time and rotational speed such that the product of the time in minutes and speed in rpm is at least 150.

33 (New). A method for manufacturing monolithic ceramic electronic component including a first external electrode, a second external electrode, and a monolithic ceramic element including an internal electrode extending to an end face thereof, the first and second external electrodes being disposed on different end faces of

the monolithic ceramic element, the method comprising forming the first and second external electrodes by:

providing a conductive paste containing oxides on separated surfaces of the monolithic ceramic element and then heat-treating the paste;

depositing metal on surface regions of the oxides that are exposed from surface portions of the sintered electrode layer, the metal being an electroplating seed for forming an intermediate electroplated layer covering the exposed surface regions of the oxides;

forming the intermediate electroplated layer on the sintered electrode layer and the seed metals disposed on the exposed surface regions of the oxides by electroplating; and

forming a plated layer on the intermediate electroplated layer.

34 (New). The monolithic ceramic capacitor-manufacturing method according to Claim 33, wherein the seed metal is deposited on the exposed surface regions of the oxides from media covered with the metal.

35 (New). The monolithic ceramic capacitor-manufacturing method according to Claim 34, wherein the seed metal has a hardness less than that of the oxides and wherein the monolithic ceramic capacitor having the sintered electrode layers thereon and the media are placed into a vessel and then mixed.

36 (New). The monolithic ceramic capacitor-manufacturing method according to Claim 35, wherein the seed metal has an ionization tendency which is lower than that of a metal contained in the intermediate electroplated layers and

wherein the monolithic ceramic capacitor having the sintered electrode layers and media are placed into an electroplating system ~~and~~ in which the metal on the media is dissolved and then precipitated.

37 (New). The monolithic ceramic capacitor-manufacturing method according to Claim 34, wherein the plated layers are formed by electroplating and the seed metal is deposited by electrolysis at a current which is one-fifth or less of the current employed in the plated layer electroplating.

38 (New). The monolithic ceramic electronic component according to Claim 33, wherein the intermediate electroplated layer is a plated Ni layer.

39 (New). The monolithic ceramic electronic component according to Claim 33, wherein the seed metal comprises Sn or a Sn alloy.

40 (New). The monolithic ceramic electronic component according to Claim 39, wherein intermediate electroplated layers comprise Ni and the plated layers comprise tin.